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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire completed by 251 school board members from across Texas revealed wide disagreement over the role of the school superintendent. Respondents identified the sizes of their districts, their educational attainment levels, and their lengths of tenure, then indicated whether responsibility for each of 29 tasks in 4 broad areas should rest with the board, the superintendent, or both. In most cases the superintendent was considered primarily responsible. Superintendents were least often considered responsible in tasks related to taxes, bond issues, establishment of personnel benefits, and selection of architects. The larger the respondent's district, the more responsibility tended to be delegated to superintendents for budgeting and finance, personnel, and school facilities and community relations, while less responsibility tended to be delegated in the areas of curriculum and student discipline. More educated board members tend to delegate greater responsibility in the area of curriculum and student discipline. No relationship was found between board member tenure and attitudes toward the superintendent's role. A survey of the literature provides a context for the study, and an 85-item bibliography lists relevant documents. (PGD)

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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF THE ROLE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT AS VIEWED BY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS IN TEXAS

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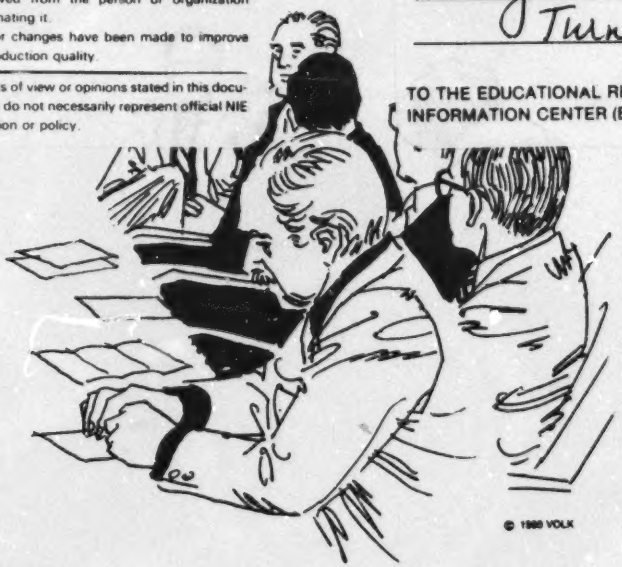

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Much has been written about the role of the superintendent which suggests a rather clear delineation between the legislative role of the board and the executive role of the superintendent. However, the actual role of the superintendent tends to be what the school board wants it to be (Dykes, 1965:67). The superintendent and school board must have an understanding of each other's role (American Association of School Administrators, 1980:1) or the status of the superintendent will be vague (Dykes, 1965:73).

Many problems centered in the schools are social and cultural which have placed stress on the relationship between the school board and the superintendent (Dykes, 1965:Forward). These problems have aided in school board - superintendent role inconsistencies. Hollis (1972:6) stated that some school boards assume more of the functional tasks in running a school than some superintendents are willing to tolerate. To avoid conflicts, the tasks of the school board and the superintendent should be clear (Hollis, 1972:9).

Education had been established in America for two-hundred years before the appointment of the first superintendent (Griffiths, 1966:1). The superintendency evolved because of a need to relieve the school boards of burdensome tasks (Griffiths, 1966:6). The initial function of the school boards was to be a legislative and executive body (Splawn, 1969:11). However, as professionalism in the superintendency grew, school boards rather reluctantly allowed more of the executive functions and financial matters to be handled by the superintendent (Candoli, 1978:28).

Griffiths (1966:2) categorized the evolution of the superintendency into three generations. The first generation, 1837 to 1910, depicted the superintendent as instruction oriented. The early superintendent's function in the school was a minor one. The boards found the ever increasing duties of school supervision to be too much for the boards to handle, and the boards delegated administrative responsibilities to the superintendent (Dykes, 1965:69). During the second generation, 1910 to 1945, the public decried a need for efficiency. Taylor, an industrial efficiency expert, and Weber, a German sociologist, were instrumental in changing the focus of a superintendent to a financial and business officer (Griffiths, 1966:21). The third generation, 1956 to present, has projected the superintendent as a professional administrator.

There has been a propensity to move from characterizing the role of the superintendent as a business manager (Griffiths, 1966:41) to characterizing the superintendent's role as a chief negotiator (Cuban, 1978:18). Obviously, increased teacher militancy and public demand for accountability have impelled the superintendent into this role.

More recently, most of the local educational policy making has been initiated by the superintendents, but the superintendents must act according to the vacillating wishes of the boards (Boyd, 1976:547). McBride (1976:99-100) concluded from his study:

> Superintendents had not clarified the role of the superintendent with board presidents. There was a lack of agreement between board presidents and superintendents in a majority of the responsibilities that relate to the superintendency. While these differences are most pronounced in curriculum and personnel administration, they occur in all areas.

Conflict between superintendents and the school boards for whom superintendents work frequently occurs. Many superintendents feel the school boards are doing the superintendent's job (Mullins, 1974:17). The designated role of the superintendent may vary according to the power structure of the board (McCarty and Ramsey, 1971), legislative mandates (AASA, 1980:2), and other variables. Failure of the superintendent to conform to the expected role will, no doubt, result in conflict. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) and National School Board Association (NSBA) in a joint position statement strongly suggested that the authority delegated to the superintendent by the board be determined in conference with each individual superintendent and reviewed regularly (AASA, 1980:2).

Statement of the Problem

This study examined whether school board members consider the primary responsibility for particular role functions to be that of the board, the superintendent, or to be shared. Another

concern was the school board members' perceptions of the role of the superintendent according to the size of the school district, attained level of education of the board member, and tenure as a board member.

Purposes of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to describe the relative role functions of superintendents and school board members as viewed by board members. Specifically, this study attempted to describe the role of superintendents as perceived by school board members from districts with differing daily attendance averages, levels of attained education, and tenure as a board member.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the role of the superintendent as viewed by board members in Texas?
2. Is the role of the superintendent as viewed by school board members affected by school district size?
3. Is the role of the superintendent as viewed by school board members affected by the formal education level of the school board members?
4. Is the role of the superintendent as viewed by school board members affected by the tenure of the board member?

Significance of the Study

The selection of a superintendent is one of the most important responsibilities of a school board. As Stapley (1957:31) said:

> Selecting a superintendent of schools to guide the educational program of a community is perhaps the most important single responsibility of a board of education.

The impact of the selection of a superintendent has not changed. More than any other single employee, the superintendent determines whether or not a school system will be efficient (Reeder, 1954:47). When there is no common understanding of what is expected between school boards and superintendents, the two will not work together effectively (Dykes, 1965:117).

Both school boards and superintendents want a good education for the youth in their schools. This is not where the conflict occurs. Conflict permeates the superintendent - board relationship when the two try to decide on what a good education is, when boards become involved in administrative duties (Cawelti, 1982:33), when the superintendent does not properly inform the board (Kipp, 1982:35), and, in general, when the two do not understand each other's needs and goals (AASA, 1982:36,59-62; NSBA, 1976:23-25). The definition of a good education has been obscured by the rapid changes in society and the changing demands on public education (Dykes,1965:115).

It is often difficult to get parties to realize the expectations of each other. A cooperative effort on the part of the school board-superintendency team is necessary for a good educational program (Dykes, 1965:103). The vitality of American education depends upon the extent to which school boards and superintendents perform their duties (Dykes, 1965:105). The duties of the superintendent vary from board to board. Various studies (Splawn, 1972; Hollis, 1972) concluded that the role of the superintendent is not the same in all situations.

Authors and researchers (Urich, 1966:294; Splawn, 1969:1; McBride, 1976:99; Kinn, 1980.224-225) found that school board members did not perceive their role and the administrator's role as did the authorities in literature. Unfortunately, there is no agreed upon set of guidelines for school boards and superintendents to follow when executing their duties. Although some have tried to list the functions of both groups, it is not always helpful to school boards and superintendents.

Only in a few states does the law spell out superintendent-school board relationships (Dykes, 1965:71). While Texas has no such law, Texas legislators are pressing school districts to use an

objective means for evaluation and dismissal of school personnel. The recently passed Senate Bill 341 (67th Legislature, 1981:2847) mandated:

> The board of trustees of each school district shall provide by written policy for the periodic written evaluation of each teacher (Sec. 20.201 of the same act refers to the term "teacher" as applying to the superintendent, also) in its employ at annual or more frequent intervals.

With the implementation of S.B. 341, the evaluation of the superintendent calls for an objective, performance-based means of evaluation. The school boards must delineate the role of the superintendent in order to comply effectively and legally.

Many boards do not know what the superintendent is supposed to do (Splawn, 1969:37). This study will attempt to describe the degree to which the superintendent and school board members work together in the process of performing various functions or tasks. In addition, this study will provide a descriptive analysis of the role of the superintendent according to school board members in Texas. From the data obtained, an instrument may be developed to aid in evaluation of superintendents, screening of prospective superintendents, and training of superintendents.

Definition of Terms

Functions are the appropriate or assigned duties, responsibilities, missions or tasks of an individual, office or organization (Good, 1973:253).

Relative role function is the degree to which a superintendent is allowed by the school board to perform a task.

Role is the "behavioral patterns or functions expected of or carried out by an individual in a given societal context" (Good, 1973:502).

School board is "the school district agency created by the state, but generally popularly elected, on which the statutes of the state or commonwealth place the responsibility for conducting the local public education systems." (Good, 1973:512)

Size of the school district is the district's average daily attendance of students as listed in the **1982 - 83 Texas School Directory** for that district. For the purposes of this study, the small district has an average daily attendance of less than one thousand. The medium school district has one thousand to five thousand students in average daily attendance, and the large school district has more than five thousand students in average daily attendance.

Basic Assumptions

This investigation was based on the following assumptions:

1. The questionnaire was a validated instrument and thus will provide accurate data to answer the research questions.
2. All respondents to the questionnaire honestly and willingly participated.
3. The identification of duties that are the primary responsibility of the superintendent were beneficial in the determination of the superintendent's relative role functions.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter was a study of research and literature relative to the school board, superintendent, and their working relationship. An attempt was made to gain insight into this relationship through a review of relevant books, periodicals, documents, and research.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The sections deal with the historical development of the school board and superintendency, the definition of responsibilities of each, and the working relationship between the two.

Historical Background of the School Board and Superintendency

The evolution of the American system of education under the control of a local district system is a unique American inspiration (Knezevich, 1975:205). As the colonists established a means of educating their children, the population in early America grew to the extent that direct lay control of the schools was not possible, and by 1647 representative boards began to govern the schools (Goldhammer, 1964:3; National School Boards Association, 1982:1).

Massachusetts is responsible for two major legal enactments which contributed to the advancements of local boards of education. In 1789 Massachusetts enacted a law requiring every town to have a committee to look after the schools (National School Boards Association, 1982:1). Then in 1826 the state in a major move toward local independence, required each town to establish independent school committees to govern the schools (Ashby, 1968a:12).

The early school boards were the administrators as well as the policy makers. However, much to the dismay of some school patrons, a controversial new office, under the proposals of Howe and Mann, was established (National School Boards Association, 1982:1). Superintendents, like the first in Buffalo and Louisville in 1837, were hired to oversee the everyday operations of the school (Brodinsky, 1977:17).

In its early stages, little attention was given this new office and its possible wresting of control from the patrons of the district. The years from 1835 to 1900 saw that control of education was clearly in the hands of the local boards. The duty of the superintendent was largely clerical and the responsibility of administration remained principally with the board. However, in the early 1900's the businessman began to use his political prowess to gain control of the board. Then, thanks to the new breed of board members and their managerial emphasis in education, the superintendent's duties tended to move from one with clerical emphasis to one with managerial emphasis (Ziegler, 1977:534-536; Iannacconne, 1970:60).

Definitions of Responsibilities of School Boards and Superintendents

Literature revealed two themes in conjunction with school board-superintendency relationships. One viewed the school board and the superintendent as a team, working together, and having overlapping duties. The other, more definitive in nature, viewed the school board and superintendent as two separate entities each with defined responsibilities that, when delineated, overlap only occassionally (Woodington, 1961:16).

Literature portrays an increasing use of the administrative team concept (Knezevich, 1975:230; Kearnes, 1982:25; McIntire, 1982: 34). This is not a new process. According to Griffiths, policy formulation and its administration are inseparable. The board acts administratively when it reviews its policies, and the superintendent acts legislatively when he is permitted input on policy formulation (Griffiths, 1956:37,230). Boards and superintendents often cross the lines of policy making and administration (Hoover, 1978:39).

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA, 1946:47) and Goldhammer (1964:39) agreed that the school board and superintendent not only should, but must rely on each other in a teamwork fashion. Yet, some duties are too detailed or important for a consensus. Woodington (1961:15) stated:

> While some successful school board-superintendent relationships exist without

> the benefit of having mutually defined their respective roles and functions, this relationship is too important to be left to precarious circumstances. This is not to minimize the importance of personality factors, the mutual adherence to certain values, and a commonality of viewpoint. Rather, while the social mucilage that cements successful school board-superintendent relationships is important, the responsibilities of the school board and superintendent are of such magnitude that an additional and firmer foundation is needed. This foundation consists of a clear understanding and consistent observance of those functions reserved for the board on one hand and those assigned to the superintendent on the other.

Authors such as Benider (1969:34) and Hoover (1978:38-40) wrote that boards and superintendents should gain a consensus and stop trying to define duties. An atmosphere of trust and respect between the two parties moderates the need to delineate roles (Griffiths, 1956:341; Davidson, 1970:160). In a call for joint cooperation, the California School Boards Association and the California Association of School Administrators related (Wennerberg, 1967:Preface):

> Perhaps at no other time in history of public education has there been a greater need for mutual cooperation and understanding between the Board of Education and its chief administrator, the district superintendent. Our rapidly changing society is bringing new pressures and demands upon public schools and those serving as members of the board or as superintendent.

The need for cooperation in a stressful time is the basis for cooperation. The document further related "mutual understanding between the board and the superintendent and an amicable resolution of problems is necessary to maintaining stability and progress in our schools" (Wennerberg, 1967:preface).

Literature revealed that the board-superintendent relationship is dependent upon role specification. Gross (1958b:139) wrote that school boards and their superintendent must establish their responsibilities so they can do the job assigned them. Goldhammer similarly (1964:107) stated that in order to maximize education "it is necessary for the board to maintain proper definitions of the shared responsibilities which exist between the citizens of the board and the professional staff." The AASA (1982:43) pointed out that the increasing pressure in today's schools along with a growing financial tightening calls for a need to specify responsibilities for "executives and policy persons in school districts."

Authors have found that role identification is a serious problem. Splawn (1969:34) found that board members actually cannot verbalize what the role of the board is, and they look to the superintendent for changes in policy.

Bart, (1980:82-90) using a questionnaire to survey school board members and superintendents in Arizona, discovered that there was some disagreement between board members and superintendents in relation to their own and each other's role. This was especially true of rural superintendents and rural board members. Bart contributed this problem to "a failure on the part of school board members or superintendents to fully understand the difference between policy-making and administrative tasks."

Barger's (1981:1861-A) findings were similar. He concluded that school board members were not able to tell the difference between the policy-making role of the board and administrative role of the superintendent.

The best division of power is the one that works (AASA, 1946: 48). Ashby (1968a:36) said that defined goals and responsibilities are often motivating forces in the school board-superintendent relationship. Therefore, not only is the school board-superintendent relationship dependent upon the specification of roles, the relationship and the role acceptance of each is important (Davidson, 1970:167). Also, opposition between the school board and superintendent frequently occurs because of a failure to define roles (Kutkat, 1981:37).

This failure stemmed from the overstated definition of roles that boards legislate and superintendents administer. Yet, because of the disagreement on how each group should act toward their respective roles (Hoover, 1978:39-40; Ross, 1982:39-41; Dittloff, 1982:41), this definition fails to provide enough proper role definition in a time of rapid change. Boards and superintendents need to establish a written framework to fit each relationship (Goldhammer, 1964:53; Thomas, 1971: 65-67; Rolle, 1978:36-37) and they need to know this relationship.

To develop a proper relationship with the board, the superintendent should know how and where he stands with the board (Anderson, 1925:24). Because the superintendent is working for a community that is represented by the board, his first responsibility is to the board (Hollingshead, 1949:140-141). He should bargain with the board in order to clearly define his

responsibilities (Thomas, 1971:65) because, above all, the superintendent "owes the board of education honesty and integrity" (Mayer, 1972:21). It is his responsibility to establish effective communication that is a precursor to good relationships (Fowler, 1975:22).

Good board-superintendent relations are greatly dependent on the superintendent. Hess in a chapter of a book edited by Ashby (1968b:25-29) suggested that the superintendent:

1. Believe the board has good intentions,
2. Be responsible for achieving unity,
3. Clarify the areas of responsibility, and
4. Involve teachers in planning.

Finally, Goldhammer (1964:54-55) felt that good board-superintendent relations were created through the working relationship. He stated:

> As an executive officer of the board, it is the responsibility of the superintendent to do three particular things:
>
> 1. It is his responsibility constantly to assist the board to evaluate the effectiveness of the educational enterprise and the extent to which it is meeting both the needs for education generally and the aspirations of the citizens of the community particularly. It is his responsibility to inform the board of inadequacies and of needs which should be met if the school is to achieve its purposes.
> 2. It is his responsibility to advise the board of various alternatives of action with respect to any of the problems with which the school district is confronted. It is his responsibility to assist the board in understanding the consequences for the community and for the public schools of its accepting one set of alternatives in place of another.
> 3. It is his responsibility to execute the policies which the board has established and to inform the board of the extent to which effectiveness of the educational program is promoted or hindered as the result of these policies.

In order to obtain and keep a harmonious relationship, certain tasks must be done. According to Fowler (1975:22) the superintendent must:

1. Talk to all board members, not just some of them.
2. Tell the board what you believe, and not what you think its members want to hear.
3. Keep surprises at a minimum.
4. Keep the board informed.
5. Stay in charge.
6. Admit your mistakes.

Boards can enhance the board-superintendent relationship by (Ashby, 1968a:64) letting the superintendent do the job that he is hired to do so that he is accountable (AASA, 1946:11) and hiring a trained school superintendent that is right for their district (Ashby, 1968a:64). The board and superintendent should scrutinize each other in the interview process (Wynn, 1981:31) so that they determine whether they hold similar ideas and "agree on policies and programs for their organization" (Gross, 1958b:113).

The superintendent has the right to expect his board to regard him as a responsible administrator and to report directly to him on school matters that need attention. He also has the right to expect the board to look to him for recommendations, to get leadership from him, and to be honest with him (Ashby, 1968a:48). Board members can prevent future strife if they point out the superintendent's mistakes in private (Nygren, 1977:37). Board members also need to evaluate the superintendent in order to help him understand how he is doing (Humphries, 1981:32).

Some authors suggested that boards do specific things in order to "get along" with their superintendent. Fowler (1975:21-22) suggested:

1. Try to understand and respect the differences between policy making and administration.
2. Insist that the superintendent offer recommendations—not just options—on all important policy matters.
3. Keep your fellow board members in line.
4. Systematically appraise the performance of the superintendent.
5. Invite the superintendent to offer an annual evaluation of the board.
6. Don't play games.
7. Establish communication channels and stay with them.

In the same vein another author offered six suggestions. Heiler (1978:26-27) suggested that boards:

1. Accept the superintendent's expertise as often as you can.
2. Do not publicly embarrass your superintendent.
3. Defend the superintendent when you can.
4. Keep your superintendent informed of your actions
5. Keep the distinction between policy making and management clearly in mind.
6. Evaluate your superintendent on objective measures, or on how he is performing.

To summarize, the relationship between the superintendent and the school board is based on mutual trust and respect (Davidson, 1970: 26-27; NSBA, 1976:23-25). Literature revealed that after this is established, communication and clearly stated responsibilities lead to a healthy board-superintendent relationship. The following two sections of this chapter will detail factors that, according to the literature surveyed, related to the board and superintendent, and the responsibilities of each.

The Responsibilities of the School Board

Through implied powers of the Constitution granted to the state, the local school board receives the responsibility of public education (U.S. Const., Amend. X). As an arm of the state government, the school boards are to function as servants of the people and in most cases are elected by the people. Board members, therefore, must see how education benefits all members of society and be concerned with the operation and improvement of the local system (Ashby, 1968a: 43). Brodinsky (1977:16), with an analogy to business, gave a general framework from which school board members may work. He stated:

> A board of education is the board of directors of a large human and business enterprise, entrusted by law with capital assets and operating funds running into the millions, and responsible for managing staffs of professionals and nonprofessionals sometimes totalling in the thousands.

States grant great authority to school boards (Goldhammer, 1964:34). Although it is a part-time, volunteer job, being a school board member is quite a chore. Except for the tiniest of districts, the operation of all details is virtually impossible. Ergo, the larger and more complex the district, the greater the differentiation in the district (Rowan, 1982:56) and historically, the less control the board holds over the school (Goldhammer, 1964:35-36).

For such a task as this, the board member must truly desire the position. Studies have shown that board members take on this position because they see it as their civic duty (Gross, 1958b:73; Splawn, 1969:34). However, Splawn found that in Texas, the reason for running is more than civic duty. Splawn (1969:34) revealed:

> Most board members will not openly admit to running for a place on the board of education because they have an "ax to grind" or for selfish reasons, but tend to reveal this indirectly when asked to state what was wrong with the school before they came on the board. Even though a large percentage stated they ran for the board or accepted an appointment on the board because they felt a civic obligation, most stated there was something wrong with the school before they came on the board.

Boards generally want the superintendent to run the school. Because of this "the superintendent inevitably structures his relationships with the board" (Goldhammer, 1964:38-39). This leads to a conflict. Gross (1958b:113) found:

> One-third (31%) of the school board members sought election to the school board because they disapproved of the way the schools were being run or did not like the way their children were being educated. Furthermore, superintendents believed two of the major obstacles blocking their effective performance were the traditionalism or provincialism of their communities and the behavior of school board members.

The board member must differentiate the policy making role of the board and the administrative role of the superintendent (Ashby, 1968a:111). Mindful that the board member's duty is to improve the local district, the good board member must know and remember the limits of his policy-making role (Donoian, 1982:34).

In order to facilitate a good educational climate, a clear understanding of the role of the board is needed by each member (Ashby, 1968a:64). Authors in the field have generously listed specific responsibilities of the board. Still the majority of responsibilities fall in two categories: policy making and decision making (Wilson, 1965:28; Mayer, 1972:11; James, 1982:17). On the other hand, James related that because of the increased legistative policy making, boards now are more often mediating the terms of the policy as opposed to making the policy.

Some authors stated that powers of the board vary to broader or narrower depending on the board (Gross, 1958b:67; Goldhammer, 1964:41). Because of this, Rubin (1967:13-15) contended that the role of the board should be defined at the state level. The roles of policy makers and administrators overlap too frequently for local boards to define.

Item by item role clarification received a boost from a finding by Nichols when he reported that the type of individual task led to differences in the perceptions of the role of the superintendent and school board. Sampling superintendents and school board members from Kansas, Nichols (1979:118-132) found the variable that had the greatest effect on the two groups was school district size.

Although there is a plethora of suggestions, a definitive role for school board members is not easy to establish. Anderson (1925:3031) asserted that some specific duties of the board in the early 1900's were as follows:

1. Levy taxes,
2. Provide school buildings and equipment,
3. Select building sites,
4. Consider and approve building plans,
5. Decide on any needed expansion of the school plant,
6. Act upon the annual budget,
7. Act as a custodian of all school property,
8. Establish the school year,
9. Select professional and nonprofessional staff,
10. Fix all salaries,
11. Advise and "pass upon the course of study,"
12. Consider reports of business transactions,
13. Consider the superintendent's reports on the progress of the school,
14. Act on the superintendent's recommendations, and
15. Have final appeal on school matters.

The AASA (1946:183) lists the responsibilities of a school board in relation to a good educational program as:

1. The board should know the characteristics of a good educational program.
2. The board should know what is going on in the local school systems in other parts of the country.
3. The board should constantly be evaluating and improving the work of the schools.

The role of the school board has come under the most scrutiny by state and national professional organizations. In an effort to unify boards and superintendents and/or coordinate responsibilities of the two groups, many handbooks are published by organizations representing the two groups.

The AASA (1946:49-51) published a list of board responsibilities similar to those listed by Anderson. A more recent AASA list (1980:3-4) viewed the specific responsibilities as:

1. Delegating administrative functions to the superintendent with few reserved areas,
2. Fully supporting the superintendent when decisions conform professionally and in accordance with board policy,
3. Evaluating the superintendent,
4. Providing the superintendent with an adequate contract,
5. Counselling the superintendent in matters where the board can aide,
6. Holding all meetings with the superintendent or superintendent designate present,
7. Consulting with the superintendent on all school matters prior to board action.
8. Developing communication with the superintendent,
9. Channelling all school communications through the superintendent,
10. Taking action after hearing the superintendent's recommendations,
11. Establishing a policy to deal with complaints in an effective manner, and
12. Providing the superintendent with sufficient administrative help.

State associations tend to be much more detailed in role definition than national organizations. Writing for a joint publication of the California School Board Association

(CSBA) and the California Association of School Administrators (CASA), Wennerberg (1967:15) greatly details the duties of the board. The areas covered were:

1. Establish district policy,
2. Select the superintendent,
3. Establish effective board-superintendent relations,
4. Establish effective board-community relations,
5. Establish procedures for board meetings,
6. Evaluate the superintendent, and
7. Fill board vacancies.

Ashby (1968b:26-27) listed the functions of the school board as four areas. These were as follows:

1. Articulation of the goals of the school system,
2. Selection of the superintendent,
3. Adoption of operating policies, and
4. General evaluation of the superintendent and the school system.

In order to establish a distinction between the responsibilities of the superintendent and the board, Davidson (1970:161-165) suggested that board members (1) establish policy, (2) adopt salary schedules, (3) determine the needs of the school from the superintendent's recommendations, (4) determine the general scope of the instructional program, (5) adopt the budget, (6) propose bond issues, (7) review financial procedures, (8) decide on needed construction, (10) represent the community attitudes, and (11) evaluate the superintendent.

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) is the national organizational representative of school boards. The NSBA (1982:7) stated that according to a review of literature, boards should:

1. Find out what the community wants.
2. Determine the needs of the school system and what will be taught to meet the needs.
3. Establish policies directed toward district objectives.
4. Obtain knowledge about the instructional program through the administrative staff and in-service meetings.
5. Assure the hiring of qualified teachers.
6. Evaluate the instructional program.
7. Inform the public of the instructional program.

The Texas Association of School Boards (TASB, 1982) listed sixteen items called "Duties and Powers of School Boards." These items included the following:

> Manage and govern the public schools of the district. Adopt such rules, regulations and by-laws as the board may deem proper. Levy and collect taxes and issue bonds. Select a tax assessor-collector.
>
> Prepare, adopt and file a budget for the succeeding fiscal year and file a report of disbursements and receipts for the preceding fiscal year.
>
> Receive bequests and donations or other monies or funds coming legally into its hands in the name of the district.
>
> Select a depository for district funds.
>
> Order, canvass the returns, declare results, and issue certifications of elections as required by law.
>
> Acquire and hold real and personal property in the name of the district.
>
> Exercise the right of eminent domain to acquire property.
>
> Hold all rights and titles to the school property of the district, whether real or personal.

Authorize the sale of any property, other than minerals, held in trustee for free school purposes.

Sell minerals in land belonging to the district.

Employ by contract a superintendent, principal(s), teacher(s), or other executive officer(s), and set salary schedules therefore.

Close the schools or suspend operation if necessary to maintain law, peace, and order.

Sue and be sued in the name of the district.

Using this set of duties and powers, the TASB (1982) drafted a list of specific responsibilities of school boards. The responsibilities were as follows:

1. Delegate administrative responsibilities except those reserved through board policy.
2. Support the superintendent in all decisions that are in accordance with board policy.

3. Hold the superintendent responsible for the administration of the school.
4. Provide comprehensive employment to the superintendent.
5. Provide the superintendent with the benefit of the board's counsel when individual board members are in the area of expertise.
6. Hold all board meetings with a superintendent or a superintendent's designate present.
7. Consult with the superintendent on all matters on which action must be taken.
8. Develop a plan for board-superintendent interaction.
9. Channel communication through the superintendent to other employees.
10. Take action on matters only after consulting with the superintendent.
11. Establish a policy to handle complaints.
12. Give sufficient administrative help to the superintendent, especially when monitoring instruction.

In summary, boards need to define and delineate their unique roles even when working as a team with the superintendent. Writers in the field of board-superintendent relationships and professional organizations have provided input as to role specifications. The board's role however, within the legal limit, tended to be what the board chose it to be.

The Responsibilities of the Superintendent

It was earlier stated that the superintendent has become a specialist in the field of education. Earlier this century the AASA (1946:32) took the stance that trained professionals should run the school. Superintendents must be leaders, scholars, and human relations specialists, as well as a plethora of other things. He must be many things to many people, and far too often he is doing things that he feels he should not be doing (Gross, 1958b:16-17). Yet, about one quarter of the superintendents still do not have a job description (AASA, 1982:33).

In school districts that have a high regard for expertise, the superintendent enjoys the opportunity to be a leader (Iannaccone, 1970:67). The Educational Policies Commission (EPC) (1965:22) said of the superintendent:

1. The superintendent must first of all be dedicated to the belief that the finest ideals of American life depend on the schools for their realizations.
2. The superintendent must have the temperament of a leader.
3. The superintendent must be a person of considerable knowledge.
4. The superintendent should expect to be involved in controversy.

One author claims that the superintendent is frequently responsible for his too burdensome tasks. Wilson (1965:27) stated "We have been too zealous to take upon our own shoulders responsibilities that properly belong to a board of education."

The job of the superintendent varies from place to place (Gross, 1958b:143), but actually it is a "dual role." The superintendent must assist the board, and also serve as the chief district administrator (Woodington, 1961:16). According to the Educational Policies Commission, the superintendent "should be a planner and developer-an initiator of change-as well as civil servant who administers in accord with established policy." He must be a community leader (EPC, 1965:16-23), and he must establish effective communications with the board (Davidson, 1970:25). He must be a curriculum specialist, technological specialist (Mayer, 1972:22), and instructional leader as well as the board's prime source of information (AASA, 1982:36).

Fowler (1975:20) claims the superintendent must possess an abundance of the following qualities:

1. Leadership,
2. Scholarship,
3. Judgment,
4. Alertness,
5. Initiative,
6. Cooperation,
7. Drive,
8. Self-confidence,
9. Communication,
10. Flexibility,
11. Stability, and
12. Reliability.

As the job of the superintendent moved from clerical to professional, superintendents changed also. In contrast to the superintendent of the past, today's superintendents are more experienced in jobs outside of education, in elementary education, have slightly less classroom experience, and are more likely to have a math, English, or drama and journalism background (AASA, 1982:21). Prior to becoming a superintendent, the individual generally does a great

deal of moving from place to place and is most often hired from outside of the district (AASA, 1982:23-24).

Many variables such as age, sex, district size, attained education level, experience, and district wealth affect board members' and superintendents' views of the superintendent. In Texas McBride discovered that the wealthier the district, the more formal education the superintendent possessed. He (McBride, 1976:85-101) discovered the following:

> 1. The older the superintendent, the longer his tenure in the same school district.
> 2. Older superintendents had less formal education than younger superintendents.
> 3. The older the superintendent, the less the likelihood that the president of the board was a member of the board when the superintendent was employed.
> 4. The more years the superintendent spent in a district, the less contact time he had with his board president.

Thouvenot (1978:5846-A) found that board members perceive that as superintendents get older they accept more independent authority, and that male superintendents assumed greater authority than did female superintendents. He also found that board members perceived the superintendents from "smaller, rural districts . . . as more independent than those from larger, urban districts."

Education seemed to have a bearing on how board members viewed the qualities of a superintendent. Board members that have two years or less of a college education perceived the superintendent as less independent than board members with two years or more of college education (Thouvenot, 1978:5846-A).

Mukensnabl (1981:120-121) reported that neither the degree that the superintendent holds nor the age of the superintendent has a bearing on his decision-making behavior. Also, superintendents in large districts are less dependent on board members in decision-making than those in small districts, and board members in the small districts expect more dependent decision-making behavior than those in large districts.

Mukensnabl (1981:120-121) found that the more educated board members expected the superintendent to be more independent. He also found that superintendents are less dependent on the board than the board is on the superintendent in decision-making.

Tippet (1982:2965-A) discovered that superintendents and board members generally agree to the characteristics that a superintendent should possess. Tippet stated:

> When board members were asked to list in order of importance personal characteristics which the superintendents should possess, they listed the following areas from most to least important: (1) leadership skills, (2) organization skills, (3) fairness, (4) communication skill, (5) good listener, (6) loyalty, and (7) political ability.

Superintendents agreed on leadership skills, organization skills, good listener, loyalty, and political ability. But the superintendents felt that communication skills were slightly more important than fairness (Tippet, 1982:2965-A).

Literature did not reveal an ideal superintendent. It did reveal that the superintendent should be a "jack-of-all-trades" and possess many qualities. This is necessary in order to accomplish the many tasks dealt to him in his tenure as a superintendent.

Early this century Anderson (1925:27-29) listed duties of the superintendent as quite varied. Again in 1946 the AASA (1946:49-51) saw the superintendent's duties as multifaceted. They were:

1. Assuming the charge of the school system; executing policies and recommending policies to the board,
2. Nominating all employees; recommending the discharge of employees; proposing adequate salaries,
3. Purchasing texts and instructional equipment; assigning instructors; continually revising the curriculum to meet changes,
4. Proposing the annual budget; administering the budget; directing the accounting of school funds,
5. Directing the planning of all buildings,
6. Directing pupil instruction, guidance, and discipline, and

7. Directing public relations programs; interpreting policy to citizens; working within the community.

Goldhammer (1964:42-46) described the board's expectations of the superintendent as one who is "executive secretary for the board," leader, manager, and "intermediary between the board and staff." More recently the superintendent was expected to be a developer of programs (Mayer, 1972:20) and negotiator (James, 1982:17).

A study in Colorado brought similar results. Harris (1970: 2055-A) found "board members expect the superintendent to take the initiative in matters pertaining to the instructional program, staff relations, and finance and budgeting."

Davidson (1970:161-165) and the AASA (1980:5) were much more detailed in their listing of duties of the superintendent, but essentially they agreed to several broad areas. Their lists included the following:

1. Acts as an executive officer for the board,
2. Executes policies,
3. Recommends policies,
4. Conducts personnel transactions,
5. Develops programs,
6. Provides leadership,
7. Presents, interprets, and analyzes budget and financial transactions,
8. Makes reports to the board,
9. Determines school plant needs,
10. Oversees school plant construction,
11. Interprets the school program to the board and community, and
12. Evaluates the work of all school personnel, instructional programs, and other aspects of the board.

Behner (1979:144-145) found that superintendents should assume more responsibility in selected areas. The areas include the instructional program, attainments of higher teacher salaries, and filling teaching positions.

Perkins (1981;144-146) found that it is the responsibility of the superintendent to monitor the progress of the district, communicate for the district, and execute the operations of the school on a daily basis. He also reported that the superintendent is expected to appraise or evaluate the programs in the district, with the smaller school district superintendent getting more directly involved.

Over-detailing of the superintendent's duties can be just as harmful as too vague a description (Dykes, 1965:73). The Educational Policies Commission (1965:15-18) categorized the superintendent's duties as formulating policy, promoting community education, and leading the staff. For California's professional organizations, Wennerberg (1967:7-9) listed duty expectations for the superintendent as (1) executive officer for the board, (2) educational leader, (3) community leader, (4) personnel leader, and (5) planner.

In summary, the superintendent serves two functions; the executive secretary of the board and educational leader of the school system. He must be possessive of qualities of both, and able to communicate effectively. His relationship with the staff and school board are of utmost importance to the functions of the school system.

The School Board-Superintendent Working Relationship

Often the relationship between the board and the superintendent is difficult to predict and, ocassionally, even tenuous. A general lack of understanding of each other's role is the major stumbling block to effective board-administrator relationships that affect the entire educational process of the school (Davidson, 1970:160). For example, Nichols (1979:131) reported that in Kansas the superintendent and board president each saw himself as having more responsibility than the other and as desiring more responsbility than the other. Each desired more control and involvement than he possessed.

Since the historical emergence of the superintendent, the boards' unwillingness to delegate their authority has led to conflict and tension (NSBA, 1982:1-2). The increasing complexity of the schools, (Goldhammer, 1964:36) the drive toward centralization of schools through consolidation, and the perceived erosion of board control (Mayer, 1972:10) have served to increase the tensions. Goldhammer (1964:36) stated:

> Many researchers have noted the degree to which the existence of ambiguity in the definition of the respective roles of the superintendent and the members of the school board has produced conflict between them.

Ziegler (1974:67) reported that the root of board-superintendent conflict is the placing of the superintendent on the level of the board. The increasing declaration of roles has worked to the benefit of the superintendent.

Crawford (1972:204) generalized that "conflict resolution and board member-superintendent consensus are not likely to occur in the absence of a uniform desire across conflicting parties for resolution and consensus, and in the absence of a commitment to achieving resolution and consensus." He believed that conflict is a "dynamic, participative phenomena."

Conflict may strain board-superintendent relations, but at least one study shows that it does not affect student learning. Farkas (1973:2956-A) concluded that conflict has no effect on the school system as measured by student achievement.

Many variables affect the relationship between the school board and the superintendent. The AASA (1946:58-59) listed deterents to good board-superintendent relations as "factions on the board, honest differences of opinion," differences that are not kept private that cause bad feelings, and "jealousy." The deterrents are often compounded by pressure applied to superintendents from boards that may differ in educational philosophy, or that vote in blocs (Gross, 1958a:64-65). Cistone (197?:112-122) noted that sociometric status characteristics of the community, school government, school system, and school authorities affect the relationship.

Clearly, the lack of understanding of roles between the two groups is the greatest factor in poor board-superintendent relationships. An inexperienced board member who misunderstands the role of the superintendent (Anderson, 1925:34-35) or a superintendent who feels there is board intrusion into his job (Goldhammer, 1964:47) may be the cause of poor relations. Gross (1958b:124-125) found that there is a great disparity of perceived roles in the areas of teacher selection, textbook selection, procedure for community use of school facilities, and decisions on salary increases.

Smith (1975:65-66,103) found that in Iowa the superintendents and board members did not totally agree on how the superintendent's role was to be performed. The tasks of the superintendent varied with the size of the district. The board chairmen in Iowa saw the role of the superintendent more in the direction of implementing policy than developing educational philosophy.

McBride (1976:87-93) reported descrepancies in the role of the superintendent as perceived by the superintendent and school board presidents in Texas. He found those descrepancies to be in the areas of development of instructional programs, curriculum, staff administration, supervision and expulsion of students, public relations, and long range planning. It was his conclusion that the board and the superintendent do not have a clarified role of the superintendent. McBride found that the board president's age, occupation, education level, and total number of years on the board made no significant difference in the role of the superintendent as perceived by the superintendent and board president.

Kinn (1980:211-213) reported that school board members and superintendents in Minnesota had similar views on twenty-two of forty-eight role statements. The areas of significant differences were (1) textbook selection , (2) curriculum, (3) personnel employment, benefits, and evaluation, (4) school finance and budgeting, (5) handling of patron's complaints, (6) facility use, evaluation, and construction, (7) administration of the policies, and (8) policy recommendations. He also reported that district size affects how superintendents see their role, but the years of formal education do not.

Tippet attributed differences between the superintendent's and the board member's perception of the superintendent's role to age of the board member and length of service as a board member. Tippet (1982:2965-A) made some interesting discoveries in his study. He questioned board members and superintendents alike and revealed the following results:

> When board members were asked to list in order of importance administrative content skill areas which superintendents should possess, they listed the following areas from most to least important: (1) curriculum development, (2) school finance, (3) personnel management, (4) superintendent-board relations, (5) accomplishment of goals, (6) public relations, (7) policy formulation, and (8) school construction.

Yet this was not similar to what the superintendents thought. Tippet further revealed:

When superintendents were asked to list in order of importance administrative content skill areas which superintendents should possess, they listed the following areas from most to least important: (1) school finance, (2) superintendent-board relations, (3) personnel management, (4) public relations, (5) accomplishment of goals, (6) curriculum development, (7) policy formulation, and (8) school construction.

Nichols (1979:119-121) listed the top eight items where significant differences occured between the superintendent and board president in viewing each other's role. He found these items to be:

1. Interviewing and recommending the employment of a new teacher.
2. Supervising the construction of a new facility.
3. Initiating new policy matters.
4. Selecting a candidate to fill a principalship within the district.
5. Assuming the responsibility for the district's public relations program.
6. Implementing the selection of a new textbook.
7. Establishing instructional policy.
8. Handling requests by community organizations to use school property.

Harris (1970:2055-A) indicated that the size of a district may be a factor in role conflict. He found that superintendents in the larger districts are not as accurate as those in smaller districts in perceiving board member expectations in various areas. He did find though, that the superintendent's length of service as a superintendent had little effect on his perceptions and board member's perceptions on the superintendent's role.

Role definition was found to be a precursor to good board-superintendent relationships in a study by Pabian (1971:2969-A).

> There was a lack of consensus between superintendents and board presidents in New Jersey regarding the perception of the role of the New Jersey superintendent of schools with superintendents perceiving the role as endowed with more authority than did board presidents.
>
> Superintendents and board presidents in New Jersey approached consensus concerning the division of responsibility in the areas of textbook selection, instructional policy, plant maintenance and attendance regulations.
>
> Superintendents and board presidents in New Jersey lacked consensus concerning the division of responsibility in public relations, budget preparations, policy initiation, and teacher salary negotiations.

A North Carolina study showed strong community ties with board-superintendent relationships. McBride (1979:6440-A) reported:

> First, there were significant relationships revealed between the divisions of responsibility between a superintendent and board of education and characteristics of the communities in which they serve.
>
> Second, the divisions of responsibility between board and superintendent were related to the presence and intensity of some educational issues within a community though strong patterns were not established. Issues related to discipline dominated the relationships that were discovered, particularly in the area of public relations.
>
> Superintendents viewed themselves as the dominant factor in decision-making. Their vulnerability to board censure, however, was evident in that they saw themselves as making the decisions after informally consulting with the board of education.

Using a questionnaire to sample superintendents and school board members in Minnesota, Kinn (1980:208-225) concluded that (1) there is a lack of consensus between superintendents and board members in relation to the role of the superintendent and (2) the lack of consensus was due to the board members' view that the superintendent was more responsible for selected tasks than the superintendent saw that he was responsible. Also concluded was that there was a lack of consensus between the two groups regarding the role of the board and that this was due to the board members' views that they should fail to accept the recommendations of the superintendent more often than the superintendent felt they should. The areas that Kinn found to be areas of disagreement were:

1. Curriculum,
2. Textbook selection,
3. Bus route planning,
4. Personnel employment and evaluation,
5. Facility building programs,
6. Federal program proposals, and
7. Policy formulation.

Perkins (1981:146-147) reported that superintendents were obviously desiring more responsibility than the boards were willing to allow. Board presidents felt that generating district goals, decisionmaking, developing district change, and pin-pointing district problems and analyzing them should be a shared board-superintendent responsibility. Superintendents in the same study felt that these tasks should be mostly a superintendent responsibility.

Bosley's (1979) study revealed some insights on the relationship between the board and superintendent. Using a seventy-seven item questionnaire to survey school board presidents and superintendents in Pennsylvania, he found that most of the differences were in the degree of the relationship between the superintendent and the board president.

Nevertheless, all conflict is not bad (Thomas, 1971:66). It may help the superintendent gain professional credibility (Kutkat, 1981: 37,44). Kutkat said that the superintendent should oppose the board when

1. the action of the board is illegal,
2. boards ignore the interests of students,
3. the board tries to exceed their role,
4. the board tries to overspend,
5. the board gives in to uninformed community pressure,
6. the board tries to use "panacea programs,"
7. the board interest may be a conflict of interest, and
8. the board blames the superintendent for unavoidable consequences.

The resolution of conflict between school boards and superintendents is a job that has been undertaken by many. In the first quarter of the 20th century, a number of textbooks of school administration were devoted to a great extent to the resolution of conflict (NSBA, 1982:2). The NSBA, related "State and national organizations sponsor workshops and seminars to help each group understand the needs and goals of the other."

Summary

The literature surveyed indicated that at best there is an uncertain working relationship between the school board and superintendent. The rapid rise to prominence of the superintendent and concurrent weakening of control of the local school board coupled with poorly defined working roles of both, has created an unsteady alliance. Due to the lack of definition of responsibilities on federal and state levels, local boards and their superintendents must communicate effectively to each other their role expectations.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This study was an attempt to gain information from selected Texas school board members in order to describe the role of the superintendent as viewed by school board members in Texas. The information gained should be useful in the development of an instrument that will be helpful in screening prospective superintendents, clarifying board-superintendent roles, and assisting boards in evaluating the superintendent.

This chapter explains the procedure used in conducting this study. It is divided into four parts: (1) selection of the sample, (2) data collection, (3) development of the survey instrument, and (4) treatment of the data.

Selection of the Sample

Board members of public schools in Texas were selected as the population for this study. The school districts in Texas were categorized into one of three size groups: Group 1 consisted of districts with less than 1000 students in average daily membership (ADM); Group 2 represented school districts with 1,001 to 10,000 students in ADM; and Group 3 consisted of school districts with more than 10,000 students in ADM. Only those districts employing a superintendent were used for this study. The sample included 400 board members from the State of Texas that serve on boards of public school districts. The 1982-83 **Public School Directory** (Texas Education Agency, 1982) was used as the source for the selection of the sample.

One hundred-fifty names of school board members were randomly chosen for Groups 1 and 2 with no more than two board members being chosen from each school district. One hundred board members were chosen from Group 3. No more than two board members were chosen from one district.

Group	ADM	Sample Size
1	0-1000	150
2	1001-10000	150
3	10000 or more	100

Development of the Instrument

The questionnaire was designed to answer the questions posed for the study. An extensive review of literature, and interviews with superintendents, school board members, and professors of educational administration were used to generate information for the development of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was then submitted to a number of doctoral students and professors of educational administration at East Texas State University to test each question for clarity. After implementing all suggestions useful to the questionnaire, a validation panel was selected to review the questionnaire for its clarity and relevance to the study. All suggestions made by the validation panel were reviewed by the researcher and selected members of the Department of Educational Administration at East Texas State University prior to implementation of the questionnaire. The validation panel consisted of Dr. Charles Matthews, Executive Director of Texas Association of School Administrators, Dr. Ralph Poteet, Superintendent of Schools in Mesquite, Texas, Dr. John Horn, Superintendent of Schools in Allen, Texas, Mr. Jerry Gideon, Superintendent of Schools in Frankston, Texas, Mrs. Judy Gilreath, board member for Sulphur Springs ISD, and Dr. Paul McCash, Past President of Texas Association of School Boards.

After all suggestions and comments had been received, the questionnaire was revised, and the results formed a two part questionnaire. The first part was designed to collect background information relative to the number of years served as a board member, school district size, and the level of formal education of the board member. The second part was designed to describe the role of the superintendent as viewed by board members in Texas. It consisted of twenty-

nine items in four task areas. The task areas were as follows: (1) budgeting and finance, (2) curriculum and student personnel, (3) personnel, and (4) school facilities and community relations.

Data Collection

After the names of board members were secured from the 1982-83 **Public School Directory** (Texas Education Agency, 1982), the home mailing addresses of the board members were obtained through the Texas Association of School Boards. A total of 400 questionnaires was mailed. The superintendent of each school district represented in the study received a description of the study and a cover letter explaining the study's purpose. Each board member selected for the study received the questionnaire, a cover letter explaining its purpose and the confidentiality of the response, and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

The initial response from the school board members produced a return of 133 questionnaires or 33.25 percent. A follow-up letter was mailed two weeks later and 118 additional questionnaires were returned. This brought the total of usable questionnaires to 251 or 62.7 percent.

Treatment of the Data

Returned questionnaires were tabulated by percentages and frequency counts. The tasks were analyzed to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The data obtained was analyzed according to the size of the school district of the board member, the board member's education level, and the board member's tenure as a board member. For table display, the percentages of the responses were placed into bar graphs in order to clearly present the results.

Chapter 4

PRESENTATION OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to describe the relative role functions of superintendents as viewed by school board members. Although the board has final authority, it usually chooses to delegate responsibilities to the superintendent and his staff. In actuality, both boards and superintendents usually have some degree of involvement in the process of performing various tasks. This study attempted to describe the degree of desired involvement in the process of performing these tasks. The data presented should be valuable to both school board members and superintendents, and should provide a basis for the development of an instrument useful in evaluating superintendents, screening prospective superintendents, and training superintendents.

This chapter is organized into four sections for the purpose of presenting and analyzing the data of this study. The first section reports the role of the superintendent as indicated by school board members in Texas. The second section presents the role of the superintendent as indicated by school board members grouped according to the average daily membership (ADM) of the school district. Section three details the role of the superintendent as indicated by school board members grouped according to the number of years that the board member has served as a school board member. Section four reflects the role of the of the superintendent as indicated by school board members grouped according to the attained level of education of the school board member.

A total of 400 questionnaires was mailed to the structured random sample of school board members in Texas. Semantics were important in the development of the questionnaire. Words describing each task were carefully chosen so as not to present a task that was obviously a responsibility of either the school board or superintendent. The 251 usable questionnaires returned constituted a 62.75 percent response rate.

The Role of the Superintendent as Viewed by School Board Members in Texas

This section presents the composite findings of the twenty-nine tasks in the four task areas. The respondents had five categories from which they could choose. They were as follows: (A) "board alone," (B) "board with superintendent input," (C) "shared superintendent and board," (D) "superintendent with board input," and (E) "superintendent alone." The research question is presented and followed by the reporting of the data and findings.

The first research question was, "What is the role of the superintendent as viewed by board members in Texas." When the data were analyzed by combining the percentages of replies from categories A and B, which are categories indicating primarily board responsibility, and categories D and E, which indicate primarily superintendent responsibility, it was found that boards generally desire that the responsibility be that of the "superintendent with board input." The category that received the highest rate of responses, "superintendent with board input," was in fifteen of twenty-nine tasks.

Table 1

Frequencies of Replies by Categories

	Highest	Second Highest	Either First or Second
board Alone	0	0	0
Bd. with Supt. input	3	6	9
Shared Supt. and Bd.	5	8	13
Supt. with Bd. input	15	6	21
Supt. Alone	6	9	15

Bar graphs indicate the percentage of responses in each role category. Table 2 lists the twenty-nine tasks by the area of budgeting and finance, curriculum and student personnel, personnel, and school facilities and community relations.

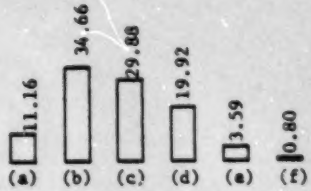
TABLE 2

The Role of the Superintendent as Viewed by School Board Members in Texas*

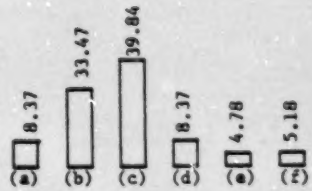
Budgeting and Finance

1. Establishes the annual budget.

2. Establishes the annual tax rate.



3. Determines the amount of a bond issue.



a - Primarily school board responsibility
b - Primarily school board responsibility with superintendent input
c - Shared responsibility
d - Primarily superintendent responsibility with school board input
e - Primarily superintendent responsibility
f - Unacceptable answer

* Reported in Percentages, N = 251, Frequency counts found in Appendix D

TABLE 2 (Continued)

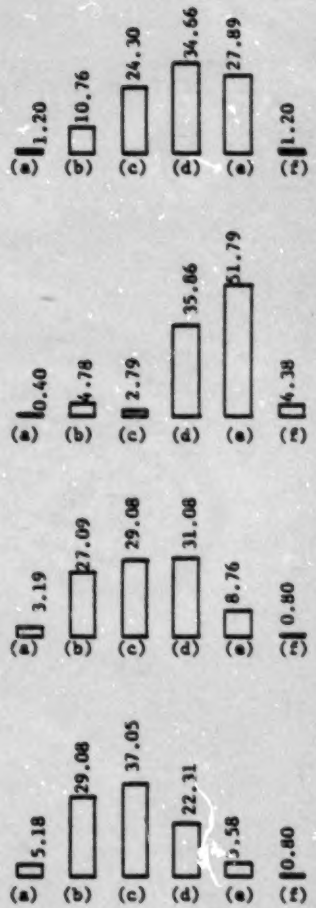
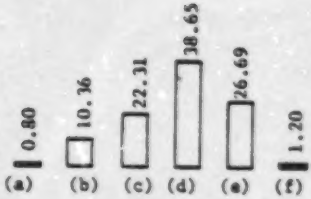


TABLE 2 (Continued)

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
8. Administers expenditures within the budget.	1.99	5.18	8.76	34.66	49.00	0.40
9. Maintains control over the budget and amendments.	5.58	18.73	15.14	35.46	23.51	1.59
Curriculum and Student Personnel						
10. Establishes the educational philosophy of the district.	5.58	16.73	31.08	35.46	10.76	0.40
11. Approves program development, modification or termination.	4.38	19.12	27.89	37.45	11.16	0.00

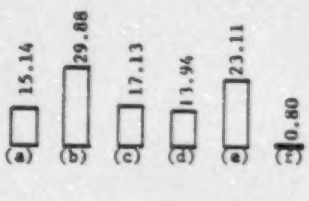
TABLE 2 (Continued)

12. Evaluates the performance of programs in the district.

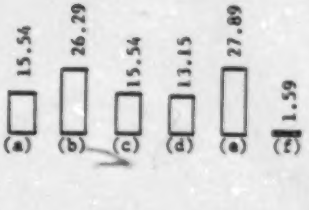


13. Decides on the textbooks to adopt.

14. Decides on student suspensions of ten or more days.



15. Decides on expulsions of disruptive students.

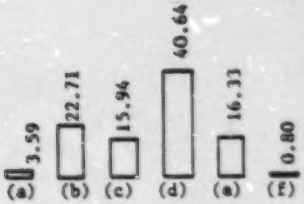


25

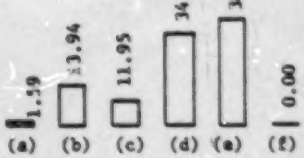
TABLE 2 (Continued)

Personnel

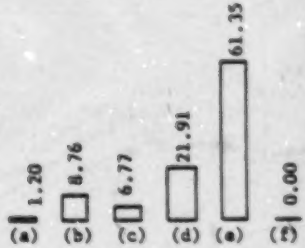
16. Selects administrative personnel other than the superintendent.



17. Selects teachers.



18. Selects non-professional personnel.



19. Selects coaches.

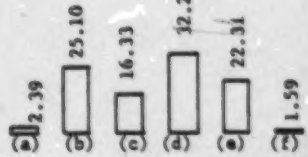
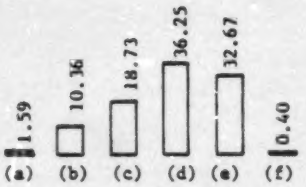


TABLE 2 (Continued)

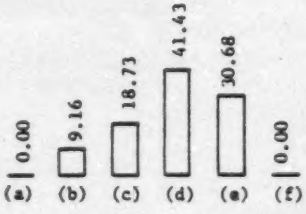
20. Determines professional development requirements within the district.



21. Evaluates the performance of administrative personnel.

School Facilities and Community Relations

22. Determines the instructional space requirements and adequacy of existing space.



23. Oversees a construction program.

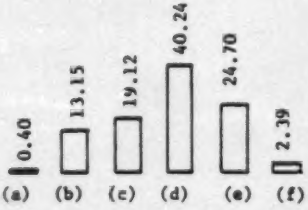
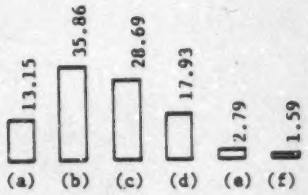
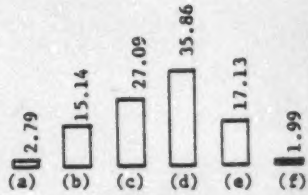


TABLE 2 (Continued)

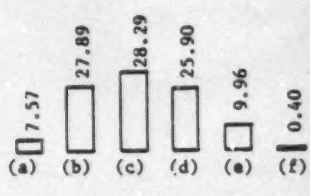
24. Selects the architect for a desired building program.



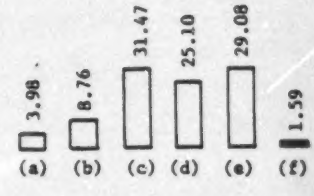
25. Establishes educational specifications for the architect in a building program.



26. Determines community use of school facilities.



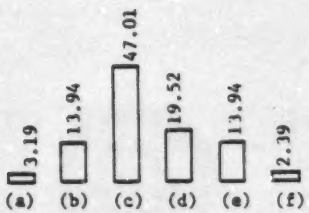
27. Informs the community of board positions and actions.



28

TABLE 2 (Continued)

28. Considers citizen complaints.



29. Determines the extent of needed school building maintenance.

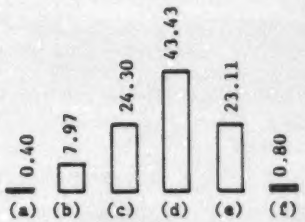


Table 2 lists the twenty-nine tasks by the area of budgeting and finance, curriculum and student personnel, personnel, and school facilities and community relations. Appendix D contains the frequency counts for each task.

Budgeting and Finance

As indicated by the data in Table 2, the task of submitting federal grant proposals is the only category that received a majority of the replies in one category. Again, combining the replies from categories A and B, and categories D and E, the data indicated that five of the tasks (1,4,5,8, and 9) were regarded as primarily superintendent responsibilities while four of the tasks (2,3,6, and 7) tended to be regarded as board responsibilities.

Curriculum and Student Personnel

The responses to the tasks that involve curriculum (10-13) did not indicate that the superintendent was viewed by the board as the instructional leader as indicated in the review of literature. Only on task 12, evaluating of the performance of district programs (65.34 percent), and task 13, deciding on the adoption of textbooks (68.52 percent) was there a majority of replies for the superintendent to be primarily responsible.

The tasks that dealt with student suspensions (14) and student expulsions (15) were two of only three tasks where the combined categories of "board alone" and "board with superintendent input" received a higher percentage of replies (41.83 and 45.02 percent) than did the combined categories of "superintendent with board input" and "superintendent alone" (37.05 and 41.04 percent). Responses to the two tasks were bipolar with board members tending to view this task as either a superintendent or board responsibility. These appeared to be task areas that need role clarification in many districts.

Personnel

When categories D and E ("superintendent with board input" and "superintendent alone") were combined in the personnel task area, all of the tasks reflected majority support (50 percent or more of the responses) for the combined categories. However, in only one task, selection of non-professional personnel, was there a majority percentage (61.35 percent) in category E, "superintendent alone."

School Facilities and Community Relations

As indicated by the data in Table 2, an interesting pattern emerged in this task area. Of the five tasks that dealt with school facilities (22-26), three tasks received replies in categories that indicated the superintendent was responsible for matters regarding the construction of school facilities. On one task (24), however, the data indicated that 49.01 percent of the school board members viewed the task as "board alone," or as "board with superintendent input" for the selection of an architect, while 20.72 percent of the school board members viewed this task as "superintendent alone," or "superintendent with board input."

The three tasks that dealt with community relations (27-29) indicated a now familiar pattern; board members viewed the superintendent as primarily responsible but desired input. The task of considering citizen complaints showed no majority response in any particular category. This is contrary to the established guidelines of handbooks on board-superintendent relationships that indicated complaints made to board members should be referred to the proper administrative authorities.

The Role of the Superintendent as Viewed by School Board Members Grouped According to School District Average Daily Membership

This section presents data related to the working relationship between superintendents and school board members in each of four task areas. The task areas were: (1) budgeting and finance, (2) curriculum and student personnel, (3) personnel, and (4) school facilities and community relations. Districts were grouped in three size categories: Group 1 (1,000 or less students

in ADM); Group 2 (1,001 to 10,000) students in ADM, and Group 3 (more than 10,000 students in ADM).

The second research question was, "Is the role of the superintendent as viewed by school board members affected by school district size?" There seems to be a relationship between school district size and the role of the superintendent as it is viewed by school board members. In budgeting and finance, personnel, and school facilities and community relations, the larger the school district in ADM, the more responsibility tends to be delegated to the superintendent. On the other hand, in the task area of curriculum and student personnel, there is a tendency toward the larger district in ADM, the more responsibility the school board desires. The findings do not agree with the review of literature in this regard.

The Role of the Superintendent as Viewed by School Board Members Grouped According to the Educational Level of the Board Member

This section presents the collected data related to the working relationship between superintendents and school board members in each of the four task areas. The six levels of education were categorized: Group 1 consisted of board members with some high school education, but without a high school diploma; Group 2 consisted of board members with a high school diploma; Group 3 consisted of board members with some college background, but without a college degree; Group 4 consisted of board members with a bachelor's degree; Group 5 consisted of board members with a master's degree; Group 6 consisted of board members with an earned doctorate.

The third research question was "Is the role of the superintendent as viewed by school board members affected by the formal educational level of the school board members?" There is a slight tendency for the more educated board members to view the superintendent as primarily responsible in the task area of personnel. A pattern can be found in one task area (Curriculum and Student Personnel) when board members with an earned doctorate and board members without a high school diploma are excluded. There is a tendency in the task area of curriculum and student personnel for the less formal education a board member receives, the more the board member tends to delegate responsibility to the superintendent. Of interest in the task area of curriculum and student personnel is the distribution of replies from board members without a high school diploma. The data indicated a disagreement of the role of the superintendent in the task area by board members without a high school diploma.

The Role of the Superintendent as Viewed by School Board Members Grouped According to Board Member Tenure

This section presents the collected data related to the role of the superintendent as viewed by school board members in each of the four task areas. Three groups were established according to the school board member's years of service. Group 1 consisted of board members that had less than three years of service as a board member, Group 2 consisted of board members that had four to seven years of board experience, and Group 3 consisted of those board members with eight or more years of board experience.

The fourth research question was "Is the role of the superintendent as viewed by school board members affected by the tenure of the board member?" There did not seem to be a relationship between school board member tenure and the school board-superintendent working relationship. This was contrary to research reported in the review of literature.

Chapter 5 completes the study. It reports the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter consists of four sections. They are: (1) summary of the study, (2) summary of the major findings and conclusions, (3) recommendations, and (4) recommendations for further study.

Summary of the Study

In school districts many tasks are typically performed by the school board-superintendency team. Although it is recognized that the school board has final authority, both parties usually have some degree of involvement in the process of performing the task. This study attempted to describe the desired role of the superintendent in the process of performing various tasks. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations should be valuable to superintendents and school board members in understanding the responsibility of each in performing various tasks. Furthermore, the results could be used to develop an instrument to aid in evaluating superintendents, screening prospective superintendents, and training superintendents.

A total of 400 questionnaires was mailed to a structured sample of school board members within the state of Texas. The 251 usable questionnaires returned constituted a response rate of 62.75 percent.

Summary of Major Findings

The major findings and conclusions regarding the role of the superintendent as viewed by school board members in Texas are presented below:

1. There is a wide disagreement among school board members in Texas as to the role of the superintendent.
2. School board members in this study tended to view many of the tasks as "primarily superintendent responsibility with board input".
3. The role of the superintendent in Texas as the instructional leader is not clearly defined.
4. Although most board members view the operation of a building program as "primarily superintendent responsibility with board input", they view the selection of the architect as "primarily board responsibility with superintendent input", or as a "shared responsibility."
5. The way that a school board views the role of the superintendent appears to be related to school district size.
6. Most board members in this study with an earned doctorate tend to delegate more responsibility to the superintendent. Board members with other educational backgrounds are not as likely to delegate responsibility to the superintendent.

Conclusions

Analysis of the findings listed above would appear to support the following conclusions:

1. Expectations of the superintendent vary from board member to board member. There appears to be an ill-defined role for the superintendent in Texas.
2. School board members in Texas want to be part of a school board-superintendency team. Possibly, board members are feeling the pressure of accountability, the new tax structure, and the politics of the community in which they serve.
3. School board members desire input into instructional programs of the district. Few board members are willing to give superintendents total responsibility for the instructional program.
4. School board members in Texas prefer to let the superintendent conduct a building program. However, the school board members prefer to have input into the selection of the architect.
5. The school board members in the smaller districts tend to be more involved in decision-making than board members in larger districts, while school board members in larger districts tend to be more willing to delegate responsibility to the superintendent. There were some im-

portant exceptions to this pattern in the areas of curriculum and student personnel.

6. Board members iwth an earned doctorate prefer to delegate the responsibilities associated with the superintendent's role to the superintendent. It may be that school board members with an earned doctorate place more confidence in the superintendent as a professional.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are presented for further consideration based upon the results of this study.

1. Due to the wide disagreement among school board members and superintendents as to the role of the superintendent, school board members and superintendents in each district should identify the degree of responsibility that each is to assume in specific tasks. Since most school boards hold board member elections on a yearly basis, this should be done at least once a school year.

2. School board members and superintendents should develop more effective communicative techniques in order to clearly establish each other's role.

3. As indicated by the results of this study, many school board members desire input into the instructional program. Therefore, it is recommended that school board members should become more aware of instructional practices, theories, and regulations through workshops and literature.

Recommendations for Further Study

The following are recommendations for further study.

1. A study should be made to distinguish regional differences in Texas of board members on the same tasks used in this study.

2. A study using the same instrument as this study should be made to ascertain the superintendent's view of the role of the superintendent in the various tasks.

3. A correlational study should be made using the same format as this study to compare the views of board members and superintendents.

4. A follow-up study should be made in five years to determine if the role of the superintendent as viewed by board members has remained static.

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